**Week 1 – Part 1.4 – Reflection on 5333**

**Self-Assessment**

As a public school teacher for sixteen years I have been very familiar with the TAAS, TAKS, and now STAAR tests. Using data to formulate strategies for instruction or tutorials is an integral part of the job. I have worked teaching third grade, fourth grade, and finally fifth grade. I have seen how the test affects students in each grade as well as teachers. The greatest pressure is on the fifth grade teachers with the development of SSI (Student Success Initiative). Often students are passed to the next level even if they did not pass the end of the year state assessment, so that when they reach the fifth grade the deficit in their knowledge level is great and the frustration level of the student is high.

While my classroom data was discussed at various lengths with the different principals I had the pleasure to work with, the discussion of our AYP and AEIS reports were usually mentioned only at the beginning of the year. I did not really pay much attention to that data, choosing to concentrate on my data and confident that if I and everyone did their job then our ratings and reports would be exemplary. This class has forced me to take a closer look and analyze how to use those reports not only help in my class but help the school and district to improve. I wish that the administration would have gone more into detail regarding the various components of each report and how to analyze that data. “Schools and districts of all sizes can use the essential-questions approach to become data-driven decision makers’ focused on improving student learning and achievement. Properly used, data can make a difference in meeting the needs of every student and can be a powerful ally in stimulating positive change and improvement from the central office to the classroom.” Ronka.D., Lachat, M.A., Slaughter, R., Meltzer, J. (2008)

I have served on site-based teams but was disappointed after this class to see how the committee I sat on could have better served our campus. The campus improvement plan was used as a document that was already created and approved and only needed to be implemented. Rarely did we look at it as what can we do to further improve the school and make new changes.

**Learn as a Learner**

Before this class my view of data was rather narrow. It was rarely that I gave much thought to the district reports and ratings; that was something that the administration had to worry about. It was not my job to be concerned about what my colleague down the hall was doing. Through having to analyze the reports for this class I have gained a new appreciation for the value of these reports. If individual teachers spent more time looking at the big picture then we could all work to improve our district curriculum and programs.

At first all the data was a little intimidating to try to analyze but once I studied them the information I gained was invaluable. To see trends, areas of weaknesses, and strengths was an eye opener to what I could do in my current position as a facilitator to help our district look at areas to make improvements.

Communicating in the discussion groups again helped me to gain new appreciation for the use of data to implement strategies in order to help students be more successful. The report ratings are important but at the heart of it all is the desire to help provide a better education for our students. Collaboration is always a beneficial way to gain new ideas, strategies, and encouragement.

**Life Long Skills**

I am now ready to be a more efficient leader by helping teachers more effectively analyze data to help the district and themselves as a classroom teacher. I am better prepared to try to foster learning communities through the planning meetings I have with teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Discussion on how to create and effectively use professional learning communities in a school setting were discussed by Huffman and Jacobson (2003). It is important that information, concerns, and ideas are shared with colleagues. “Along with traditional professional development activities, teachers would have an array of possibilities for enhancing their learning, including professional reading, peer-to-peer coaching and mentoring arrangements, and personalized growth plans.” McTighe, J. (2008) New research and ideas need to be discussed and shared for innovation in our field. At times it is important that teachers are allowed the simple and often necessary relief of being able to voice their frustrations and concerns. “Educators need to be the ‘village’ for every student. But such an intense collaboration does not occur naturally; it requires planning, training, and a leap of faith.” Richardson, M.(2005) Currently due to the budget cuts all facilitators on my campus are required to teach their subject to a class. The collaboration that happens when we are all in the office together is amazing. We share student achievement and behavior, what strategies worked with each student, and if there was some concern that needs to be addressed. I feel this class will benefit greatly from this collaboration.**References**

McTighe, J.(2008). Making the most of Professional Learning Communities. *The Learning Principal,*3(8),3-7

Richards, M. (2005). Consensus. *Principal Leadership,*6(4),32-35

Ronka.D., Lachat, M.A., Slaughter, R., Meltzer, J. (2008). Answering the Questions that Count.

*Educational Leadership,*66(4), 18-24